

XV. CONCLUSION

984. In this Order, we have adopted rules based upon the recommendations of the Joint Board, the principles set forth by Congress, and the additional principle of competitive neutrality. The Act instructs the Commission, on the recommendation of the Joint Board, to adopt a new set of universal service support mechanisms that are explicit and sufficient to preserve and advance universal service. The steps we take today will ensure that access to telecommunications, including interexchange services, advanced telecommunications, and information services, is available in all regions of the nation. Consistent with the Joint Board's recommendation and in cooperation with the states, we have adopted rules that will ensure quality telecommunications services at affordable rates to all consumers, including low-income consumers and those in rural, insular, and high cost areas. The rules and policies established herein also will have a profound impact upon education and public welfare by providing advanced telecommunications and information services to schools, libraries, and rural health care providers across the nation. Eligible schools and libraries will be able to purchase telecommunications services at discounted rates and eligible rural health care providers will have access to telecommunications services at rates comparable to those in urban areas. As required by the 1996 Act, these universal service mechanisms, which will be supported by equitable and nondiscriminatory contributions by all telecommunications carriers that provide interstate telecommunications services, are explicit, specific, and predictable, and will be sufficient to preserve and advance universal service.

XVI. ORDERING CLAUSES

985. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to the authority contained in sections 1-4, 201-205, 218-220, 214, 254, 303(r), 403, and 410 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 151-154, 201-205, 218-220, 214, 254, 303(r), 403, and 410, the REPORT AND ORDER IS ADOPTED, effective 30 days after publication of a summary in the Federal Register. The collections of information contained within are contingent upon approval by the Office of Management and Budget.

986. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Part 54 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 54 is ADDED as set forth in Appendix I hereto, effective 30 days after publication of the text thereof in the Federal Register.

987. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Part 36 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 36 is AMENDED as set forth in Appendix I hereto, effective 30 days after publication of the text thereof in the Federal Register.

988. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Part 69 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 69 is AMENDED as set forth in Appendix I hereto, effective 30 days after publication of